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A SKETCH

OF THE

GOVERNOR FENTON.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF

REUBEN E. FENTON,

A MEMBER OF

XXXIII, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII & XXXVIII CONGRESS,

AND

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

"The able Governor and the honest man."—JOHN A. KING.

NEW-YORK:
GEORGE F. NESBITT & Co.,
CORNER OF PEARL AND PINE STS.

1866.

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The writer desires to express his hearty thanks to Mr. D. A. Harsha, of Washington County, for valuable materials generously placed at his disposal, and largely employed in the preparation of the following sketch.

NEW-YORK, *20th Oct.*, '66.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

REUBEN E. FENTON.

By the action of the Republican Union Convention recently held at Syracuse, Governor Fenton has been again presented to the people of this State as the exponent of the political organization which led forward the nation in the late war with traitors—a war which, so far as the contests of arms are concerned, has ended in the complete overthrow of the enemies of Liberty.

In re-nominating Governor Fenton, the Convention declared, as a substantial part of the platform upon which the people will be called to pass at the coming election, "that Reuben E. Fenton, by his able, faithful and vigilant discharge of his duties as Governor, has deserved and secured the confidence and gratitude of the people of this State."

A brief review of his career, not as Governor only, but from the outset, will show that the confidence of the Convention was not misplaced, and that the people can with an assurance of entire safety to all the mighty interests involved in this election, cast their votes in his favor, on the sixth of November.

ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE.

Reuben Eaton Fenton was born on the anniversary of our National Independence, 1819, in what is now known as the town of Carroll, Chautauqua County, New-York; he is therefore about forty-seven years of age. He is a descendant of Robert Fenton, who was a noted man among the early settlers of Connecticut, and one of the patentees of Mansfield, when that town was set off from Windham, in 1703. This family furnished its share of soldiers in the Revolutionary War, and its record of early service and sacrifice for "the good old

cause" is in the highest degree honorable. About 1777, Roswell Fenton, the grandfather of the Governor, removed from Mansfield to Hanover, New Hampshire. Here George W. Fenton, the father of Reuben, was born, and here he resided until 1808. In that year he removed to Chautauqua County, in this State, and settled on a farm upon a part of the Holland Land Company Tract, where his son, the Governor, still resides. Thus the Governor and his family have, from an early period, been identified with the interests of the Empire State, and he has had every opportunity to become familiar with its wants, its resources, and its people in every condition.

Governor Fenton is emphatically a self-made man. Until fifteen years of age his life was that of a farmer's son, employing the summer in farm labors, and spending the winter in the log school-house of the district where he dwelt. Between 1834 and 1838 he enjoyed short terms of instruction at "College Hill Academy," near Cincinnati, and at the "Fredonia Academy," in this State, making rapid progress as a student, and receiving the approbation of his teachers for his upright and faithful conduct. While at these academies he read several elementary law books, and in 1838 entered the law office of Joseph and Franklin H. Waite, Esqrs., where he remained nearly a year as a student at law. It was not, however, his object to engage in that profession, but he sought to acquire a complete fitness for an active business life, by familiarizing himself with those principles and forms of law which enter into the usual course of mercantile transactions. Financial misfortune occurring while yet a youth, rendered it impossible for young Fenton to avail himself of the means of education provided at that early day in his own section, as he desired. And that large knowledge and grace of elocution which has since rendered him one of the most useful of our representtatives in Congress, and a persuasive and accomplished debater, are the result of assiduous self-culture and patient effort during the busy years of his mercantile life.

A LUMBERMAN.

In 1840, young Fenton, leaving his father's farm, with the most limited means, commenced the business of a lumberman, which he steadily pursued for many years, and finally with very great success.

By careful attention to business, by his habits of personally supervising his own concerns, by the straightforward, prompt and upright course of dealings, he established a highly honorable business character among all who knew him. Gradually extending his transactions, he finally became one of the largest lumber dealers in his region, and was well and honorably known from the head waters of the Alleghany to the mouth of the Ohio. His never-failing success finally became proverbial among the lumbermen, and they uniformly asserted that "it was impossible for his property to be injured, he was so lucky." This success, however, was not the result of luck, but of the most vigilant and untiring endeavor and constant personal supervision.

This habit of personal attention to all matters confided to him, thus begun in early life and continued to the present time through all the phases of private and public business in which he has been engaged, constitutes one guaranty of success, as it also does one element of Governor Fenton's fitness for the exalted position which he now honorably fills, and for which he is a second time a candidate.

AS SUPERVISOR.

At the age of twenty-three—in 1843—Mr. Fenton was chosen Supervisor of the town of Carroll, Chautauqua County, and held that position for eight successive years, and was for three of those years Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. The fact that an avowed Democrat, as he was, remained in office for that long period in a strong Whig locality, is the most unanswerable evidence of his faithfulness as a public officer and his popularity as a man.

In 1849 he, was the Democratic candidate for Assembly for the Eastern District of Chautauqua against Major Samuel Barrett, of Jamestown, and was defeated by twenty-one votes. Major Barrett was a most popular man in his party, and Chautauqua was the Banner Whig County of the State.

The strongest possible proof having been given of the great popularity of Mr. Fenton, the Democratic party placed him in nomination for Congress in 1852. His opponent was Hon. G. A. S. Crooker, of Cattaraugus, a Whig lawyer of brilliant talents and an effective platform speaker. Mr. Fenton

entered into this contest with vigor, employing those elements of power which had rendered his business life successful, and, after a most exciting campaign, was returned to Congress by a majority of fifty-two votes over his competitor. The remainder of the regular Whig ticket was elected in the District by a majority of over three thousand votes.

HIS CONGRESSIONAL CAREER.

Mr. Fenton—then thirty-four years old—entered the XXXIIId Congress as a supporter of the administration of President Pierce; and he enjoyed to a flattering degree the confidence and esteem of the President and his Cabinet. On the 7th day of December, 1853, he took his seat in the House, and on the 12th of that month he presented a petition on behalf of the invalid soldiers of 1812, asking pay for their services. On the 4th of January following, he introduced a bill providing for the payment of the property accounts between the United States and the State of New-York for military stores furnished in the war of 1812, and shortly thereafter he was appointed Chairman of the important Committee on Commerce. This latter fact shows clearly his high and influential position in his party, as a new member of the House, and especially one so young, is rarely given the chairmanship of a leading committee.

It soon became apparent that President Pierce and some of the leaders of the Democratic party had given themselves over to the slave power beyond recall, and were seeking, in spite of the most solemn pledges, to make devotion to the interests of slave-masters a cardinal feature of the Democratic party, and an assent to the removal of that "Landmark of Freedom," the ancient Missouri Compromise, the one test of faithfulness. To this Mr. Fenton, a Democrat of the school of Madison and Jefferson, could not submit. Born of a race of hardy men, inured to honorable labor, and in early life earning his bread in the sweat of his face, placed in Congress by the votes of men whose faces had been bronzed by exposure, and whose hands were hardened by personal toil for themselves and their children, he could not for mere party be false to the influences which clustered about his home, which flowed in upon

him from his friends and neighbors, the traditions of his fathers and the lessons of his own life.

Accordingly, on the 15th of February, 1854, in reply to remarks of Mr. Smith, of Virginia, Mr. Fenton, entered his solemn protest against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and abandoned thenceforth the Democratic party, no longer that grand and triumphant organization of the friends of human rights, but now established upon other principles, and made the abject tool of the slave power. In the conclusion of this speech he observed, with perfect justness of doctrine and great beauty of diction:

> I will go as far as the furtherest to give this territory (Nebraska), a government adequate to its protection, just in all its provisions, placing all men upon an exact equality of Republican freedom. In that I shall have the approval of my own conscience, the approval of all good men, and, in the end, the approval of all my countrymen, when they shall see those territories studded all over with the abodes of freemen, surrounded by cultivated and fruitful fields, which their efforts have made to bud and blossom as the rose.

Sad, indeed, it is, that the little leaders of the great Democratic party did not then heed the counsels of those, who, like Fenton, were true alike to its ancient principles and to the cause of the country. The dishonored fragments of this once patriotic organization, tossing on the waves of our great civil war, the sport of every accidental and cross current, and now scattered as loathsome remains along a wave beaten strand, are at once the evidence of their folly and his wisdom; and concurring with this is the voice of the whole people now emerging from the long years of agitation and strife then begun, and perhaps, even now, not soon to end.

On the 27th day of June, 1854, Mr. Fenton made an able speech in reply to Mr. Olds, of Ohio, in advocacy of a cheap postal system. The positions which he then took were sustained by carefully compiled statistics, showing clearly the advantages of the cheap system. It is not too much to say that he then demonstrated, not only that the people required this reduction in postal rates, but that such a system would result in an active increase of the revenues of the Post-Office Department. In the course of his remarks he observed:

> The spirit and intelligence of the age are averse to retrogression. Everything indicates an onward and upward tendency in whatever serves to elevate man, and improve his social, intellectual condition. I need not detain the committee a moment in

proving that the cheaper the rates of postage the greater the happiness, intellectual and business prosperity of the people. Friendly greetings are exchanged, parental, filial and fraternal sentiments are fostered and kept fresh in the hearts of separated friends. The immense increase of letters sent through the mails in the last ten years over the increase of population furnishes irrefutable evidence of the proposition.

The cheap postage question is now past discussion, even among those who are not "averse to retrogression;" all concede the forecast and the wisdom of those who were its early and determined advocates.

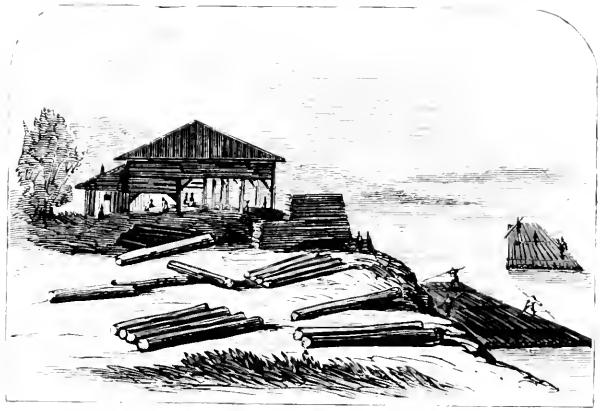
During his first Congressional term, Mr. Fenton also spoke with especial ability in favor of the bill to extend invalid pensions, and also the bill upon the general subject of River and Harbor Improvements, in respect to which he advocated liberal, but judicious appropriations in instituting and carrying on to completion those works which were designed to promote more immediately the commercial interests of the country.

At the second session of this Congress he introduced and advocated with his usual ability and thoroughness of research, and finally carried through, a bill improving the harbor of Dunkirk, in this State, which gave great satisfaction to the people of that locality, and materially increased his popularity.

As Chairman of the Committee on Commerce his tasks were various and most burdensome, but they were performed in a manner satisfactory to all. By a faithful performance of his duties as a member of various committees of the House—duties which attract no public notice and bring no applause, and a patient and unwearied attention to the calls of his constituents, he attained the front rank in that small but most useful and honorable body of men, the working members of Congress.

In 1854 Mr. Fenton was the "people's candidate" in opposition to Hon. F. S. Edwards, the nominee of the American or Know-Nothing party, receiving the nomination only two days before the election. He was defeated by a majority of fourteen hundred votes, but his popularity was not weakened, and the public voice, with singular unanimity, long before the recurrence of a Congressional election, fixed upon him as Mr. Edwards' successor.

In this connection it seems proper to quote an extract from a speech of Mr. Fenton upon a bill to regulate emigration to this country, as containing



the most equitable views respecting the numerous questions involved in such legislation, and as also expressing the prevailing opinions among all parties:

"I freely admit the existence of evils growing out of the system of tactics adopted or practised by both political parties in their relations to our adopted citizens. Their prejudices, as a class, have too often been appealed to, and their suffrages secured by means alike discreditable and pernicious, and, so far as this order may correct this and other evils of the old organizations, it has my approval and co-operation. The purity of our elective franchise depends on the influences that control its exercise, and, therefore, all appeals to the cupidity, ambition, or prejudices of the electors, should be discountenanced by every friend of our institutions. But surely these good ends can be accomplished by open means, without infringing upon the acknowledged rights of any of our citizens, or doing violence to sentiments which recognize the brotherhood of man. The first general idea that has attracted my notice, said to be partially embraced in the designs of this party, (*i. e.* "Know-Nothing Party,") is a restriction upon emigration to this country from other nations. That the emigration hither of the paupers and criminals of Europe, giving to us the dregs of a population which the reformatory laws and regulations of despotic governments have cast out, even of their jurisdiction, as unwholesome, should be prohibited, cannot I apprehend, admit of a serious doubt. The committee, of which I have the honor of being a member, have had this subject under consideration, and have reported a bill carefully guarded, and of great stringency upon this subject, which, if adopted, I confidently hope will remedy, to a considerable extent the growing evil. On the other hand, that obstructions should be placed in the way of the intelligent, industrious, sober and enterprising men, who seek a home in this proclaimed 'land of the free and home of the oppressed,' with the hope of bettering their condition, I cannot believe will be tolerated, on due reflection, by any liberal mind. Let us inquire, Mr. Speaker, if it would not be better, more in accordance with the spirit and genius of our institutions, that while we guard so far as we may against the evils I have referred to, we should turn our attention with renewed interest to 'Americanizing,' if I may be allowed the use of the term, the foreign population now among us, and those who may hereafter come to our shores. The foreign element is already here, and its magnitude and importance will be increased. Causes beyond our control have long ago settled this question. The manner in which these people are to be received and treated, presents a grave and important question which we must meet. Will they be likely to forget their early habits and impressions, to regard our country and its laws with favor, and become the earnest promoters of its interests in peace and the defenders of its safety in war, if we close our hearts and our sympathies against them, and treat them as a proscribed and suspected people? Will they not remain among us, aliens in sentiment and feeling, as well as in character and condition? Will not the unavoidable effect of an intolerant and exclusive policy be to unite and combine the foreign population in a community of feeling and of interest, and place them beyond the influence of the sentiments that fill our own bosoms as American citizens, proud of our country, and solicitous of its welfare? In this condition, would they not form in our social and political economy an element of weakness, if not of danger? These, it seems to me, sir, are interesting inquiries, and demand the honest investigation and conscientious action of every one who may be in position to influence the direction of public affairs. The experience of the world may be safely consulted as a guide in the matter. The endless contests in almost every other country on earth, between

classes and conditions, the oppressed and the free, the privileged and proscribed, furnish lessons of instruction and warning; they serve as beacon lights to warn the thoughtless and indifferent of impending danger. Philanthropy instead of self-interest, wisdom and not passion, should influence our reflections upon this subject; and, thus actuated, we need not fear that we shall go very far astray. The intelligent judgment of a great and noble people, in whose veins courses the best blood of races, will settle the question in accordance with the rights of all the parties, the dictates of enlightened civilization, the best interests of the country, and the spirit of the age. I have regarded the mission of this country with somewhat different views than it would seem are cherished by the organization of which I have been speaking. We have claimed for ourselves the purpose of civilizing, Christianizing and elevating the human race. These men are our brethren, for our common Father 'hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.' Let us, then, so far as practicable, elevate, disenthrall and redeem those who are cast among us from the vices and errors of their years in a foreign land, under governments and with people less just and less favored than our own, and recognizing their common brotherhood, seek to give them a share in our common glorious inheritance."

Mr. Fenton has from the outset been identified with the Republican party, and has always held an influential position. He was a delegate to the Pittsburgh Convention in 1856, and also a member of the Philadelphia Convention, which on June 17th, 1856, put Gen. John C. Fremont in nomination on a platform opposed to the extension of slavery, and the corruptions of the modern Democracy. The previous year—1855—however, he was unanimously chosen to preside over the deliberations of the first Republican Convention of this State, which met at Syracuse. He participated actively in that exciting and memorable contest, "the Fremont Campaign." In September he was unanimously nominated by the Republicans of his District, as their candidate for Congress. He was again opposed by Mr. Edwards, as the American, and Hon. C. J. Allen, as the Democratic candidate for the same office. The canvass was exceedingly bitter, but Mr. Fenton came out of it with a majority of eight thousand six hundred and ten over Mr. Edwards, and of more than five thousand over both opponents.

In the XXXVth Congress, Mr. Fenton was again placed upon the Committee on Commerce, though his services as a Representative were not confined to the matters properly within its supervision. He took a prominent part in the discussions of the affairs of Kansas, then invaded and over-run by the border ruffian representatives of the Pro-Slavery party. Crimes and outrages of the most revolting character, perpetrated in the interests of slavery, and

defended on the floors of Congress, civil war already commenced by slave masters to overthrow free labor, had vindicated the wisdom of his protest against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

On the 24th of February, 1856, Mr. Fenton delivered a moderate, but most firm and able speech on Kansas affairs, in the House, in which he condemned the policy of the Democratic party, with regard to Kansas, and charged upon those who brought about the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the guilt of inaugurating the policy which was then culminating in blood, and threatening to destroy the Union. He observed:

"I was one of those who believed the measure fraught with all the mischief which has flowed from it and declared my convictions, from my place in the thirty-third Congress, that it was the true intent and meaning of that Act to carry slaves not only to Kansas, but to open the door for its introduction into all the other territory of the United States. How far subsequent events have verified this view, let the flames of civil war, and the martyr blood crying from the ground once dedicated to freedom, and shed in defence of its birthright, the barbarous doctrine of the Dred Scott decision, the servility to slavery extension by the President, and the tyranny of usurped power in Kansas, answer!"

During that session, Mr. Fenton took a prominent and most active part in the effort to secure a recognition of the claims of the invalid survivors of the war of 1812, introducing several resolutions, and again and again pressing the matter upon the attention of the House. On the 24th of April, 1858, he delivered an eloquent and conclusive speech in support of these claims, in which he said:

"I ask that we shall do justice to those men according to the understanding under which they entered the service in 1812. * * * I find that the people of this country ever regard it as a duty to sustain those who become disabled in the military service. * * * It was in view of these provisions [alluding to the promises in laws previously passed] that many brave men presented their breasts to the enemy, and received the blow which was aimed at their country. * * * Shall it be said that the representatives of a people now great in power and resources, in whose ears the echo of the valor of these brave men still rings, are reckless to the obligations of contract and promise made to them when they entered the service? I will not believe it; nor will I believe that for an age beyond when our people shall only know of their sacrifices and achievements by tradition and history, and will be found unwilling or tardy in discharging the last lingering obligations to those gallant men."

In conclusion, he exhorted the House "to triumphantly vindicate our appreciation of the services of all, and a nation's gratitude to all her sons."

On the 11th of June, 1858, Mr. Fenton addressed the House in support of a bill providing for the final settlement of the claims of the soldiers of the Revolution. This speech shows the most careful preparation, and is an exhaustive review of our whole legislation upon the subject under consideration, and proves by an irresistible logic, the necessity of further enactments. In conclusion he remarked:

"Certainly, upon a thorough examination of the subject, all must realize that great injustice has been done to those who have achieved our independence as a nation, and that it is the duty of Congress to remove at once the foul blot which now rests upon our national honor. I am moved to indignation, at the ingratitude and the almost criminal neglect of the Government and the Representatives, towards those who laid the foundation of all our greatness, our power and our glory. Think not that our people will be content with delay—with the shuffling off from year to year of these long deferred and just claims. Let them know at once what they have to depend upon, and let it be in consonance with the voice of gratitude and justice. Be true to them, and they will be true to themselves and to you."

About one year later, he again urged the passage of this bill, in an unanswerable speech; and finally, after great exertions, on the floor of the House, in committee, and among the members, on the 30th of May, 1860, it was passed by a vote of 98 to 80.

On the 10th of January, 1859, the Soldiers' Pension Bill being under discussion, Mr. Fenton again addressed the House in favor of a liberal provision for those who had vindicated the old flag upon the field. The following extract is made from that short, but most effective effort:

"Those who entered the service in the war of 1812, were not expecting a pension for service simply; they were not promised it; but were promised pay, which they generally received; I admit a poor equivalent for their gallantry and patriotism, if this was the only consideration in upholding the standard of their country, and vindicating its honor. But such was not the case—they would spurn the suggestion. Their great reward was to be found in the fortress they erected to civil and religious freedom; in the priceless glory of liberty perpetuated. We, however, said, if they were disabled while in the line of their duty, that they should be pensioned from the date of their injuries or wounds, according to the nature and degree of their disability, to continue during life. * * * None will accuse me of indifference to the services, heroism and sacrifices of all those who were in the struggle of 1812, and in the Indian wars; we owe them a debt of gratitude; we should honor them living, care for their wants in middle life, their infirmities in old age, and revere their memories when dead. * * * It is the duty of the Government to carry out its contracts with all, especially with those who entered the service in the hour of her peril: it should, moreover, be the pride of a people reaping the reward of the patriotism and the valor

of those who defended their honor and flag, and preserved their heritage by heroic deeds, to provide for their independence from want in the decrepitude of age. And yet, I will not believe that the patriotism of our people requires even this to impel them to defend homes and firesides, and the free institutions of these United States, handed down as a legacy by the fathers."

In 1858 Mr. Fenton was again returned to Congress, and throughout both sessions he took a leading part in the deliberations of the House. His clearness of judgment, his determination in a just cause, his singleness of heart in all that affected the highest interests of the nation, the correctness of his views, and his untiring industry, rendered him one of the most trusted and useful of Congressmen during this trying period. The angry threats of a dissolution of the Union, if the opposition did not cease to slavery extension, became louder than ever; but threats of violence and revolution did not swerve him from his course.

On the 16th of February, 1860, in the Committee of the Whole, he delivered one of his ablest speeches, on the political issues of the day, the annual message of the President being under consideration. In this speech he reviewed the course of the parties on the slavery question from the earliest periods, and by copious citations showed the position of the leading statesmen of the country of all parties to have been, down to a very late day, in principle, that held by the Republican Union Party. He then demonstrated that the Democratic Party was committed by its record, and by the declarations of its leaders to a maintenance of the same doctrines, but that under the influence of slavery, and its thirst for political power, it had violated its pledges and made itself the chief instrument in the support of the new slave creed. Brought face to face in this discussion with the monster crime, his aspirations of patriotism and philanthropy could not fail to present the vision of a peace in the future founded on liberty; and he said:

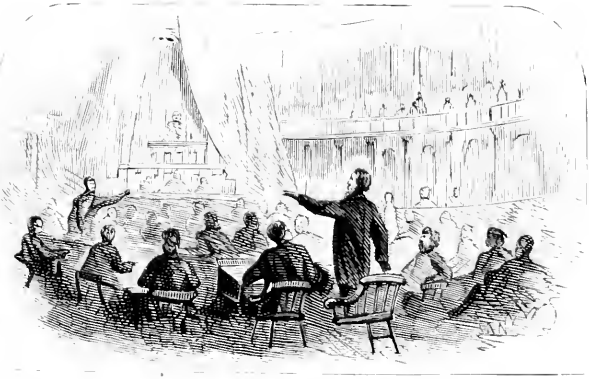
"Slavery is doomed, sooner or later, to perish. In this view men have spoken of the irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery, and it is a philosophical truth that one or the other must recede—one must triumph and become supreme. Sober men and men of reason will not be in doubt as to the result, no more than they will doubt the ultimate triumph of right and justice in all things, over error and wrong. In this view, speaking not of my political duties and obligations to the government, and disclaiming in this respect, or any other, the right to interfere with the domestic institutions of the South, I hope the time may come, not distant, when the sun in his

course across the continent will not shine upon a slave; when the inalienable rights which belong to all men shall be universally recognized and become the conceded right to be enjoyed by all. If I speak with undue warmth, in the words of Edmund Burke, something must be pardoned to the spirit of liberty."

No speech on the floors of Congress more completely vindicated the Republican Union Party, than this, from one of its founders; justifying it in its origin, its progress, in the position it then held, and, in conclusion, foretelling its final triumphant victory—a victory now not far distant. Mr. Fenton assured the slavery propagandists that their dishonest and unholy conduct had "given the Republican Party a rising power and swelling current of public opinion which can no more be turned aside than the course of the wind or the on-sweeping tide of the ocean."

So far, events have justified this declaration. The people, rising in the name, and adopting the principles of the Republican Union Party, have come out, from every contest, victorious! Overthrowing, at the ballot-box, the enemies and lukewarm friends of the Union, they have carried the Government triumphantly through the frightful war, supplying the treasury with their money, the Army and Navy with their sons, and enriching the battle-fields, which now consecrate the soil of the rebel States to liberty forever, with their blood. But the force of this "swelling current" is not spent. The Representatives of the people, sustained and approved by them in the elections of the present year, must, in Congress assembled, fix the basis of restoration upon immutable conditions of liberty and justice—placing beyond further question or peradventure, the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence, and testifying to the world that treason to a free Government is a most atrocious crime.

In 1860, Mr. Fenton, by a largely increased majority, was returned to the XXXVIIth Congress, and through the whole of that most trying period—embracing the hopeless attempts to avoid the rebellion by reasonable concession, the season of sad and gloomy doubt, when it became clear that the South was determined upon a rupture, and the early period of the "great conflict," when the attempt was made to wage war upon peace principles, he was found faithful at his post, having faith in the people, faith in the Govern-



ment, and faith in the cause. His record, in this as in every other Congress in which he acted, is filled with the evidence of laborious services for the good of his country.

In 1862, Mr. Fenton was returned to the XXXVIIIth Congress. During its sessions he made speeches on the Deficiency Bill, the bill to Facilitate the Payment of Bounties, on the Repeal of the Fugitive Slave Laws, on Providing for Payment of Losses of Loyalists by the Rebellion, etc.; but the limits assigned for this sketch do not allow any extended notice of any of them, or even a complete enumeration of the leading measures with which he was connected. It does not, however, seem just to pass without some notice his speech on the Bounty Bill, which is a model of business discussion, and has no superior, in this respect, in the whole series of reports of Congressional debate. In this, as in all his actions on kindred subjects, he showed himself keenly alive to the interest and welfare of the soldiers and their friends:

"The delay in the payment of these dues to the relatives of the deceased soldiers, arrears of pay and bounty, has been the source of wide-spread complaint, and the subject had, early in the session, my earnest investigation in search of the cause and the proper remedy, so that the heirs of those who laid down their lives in defence of the institutions of the country should not complain of unnecessary delay in the adjustment of these claims. * * * The difficulties with which the Secretary of the Treasury and the Auditor have had to contend are great: pass this bill and you give them relief from the pressure of obstacles and complaint, and make the poor and deserving claimants, the relatives of our brave soldiers, rejoice."

It would be gratifying, and most profitable, to dwell with much greater detail upon the Congressional career of Mr. Fenton, prolonged through a period of nearly ten years, and to illustrate it by more copious citations from his numerous speeches, and more particular references to the history of the times, and to show from the record itself how, from year to year, he grew in power, strength and influence among his colleagues on the floor; but this cannot now be done. But a small part has here been referred to; surely enough, however, to justify in all minds the action of his constituents in constantly returning him, and the Republican Union Party in the confidence they have always reposed in him, enough surely to vindicate the action of the Union Convention, which at Syracuse, on the 7th of September, 1864, nominated him for the office of Governor—he worthily succeeding in the affections of patriotic

men to the gallant and lamented Gen. Wadsworth. Pitted against Horatio Seymour, then Governor, a wily and fair-seeming politician, his defeat was sought by the most strenuous efforts, in which unfair and even dishonest means were not considered objectionable. But he was elected by a handsome majority, the Union men of the State concurring in the opinion expressed by the *Albany Evening Journal*. "As Governor, Mr. Fenton will prove emphatically 'the right man in the right place.' He possesses the qualities, both social and intellectual, which pre-eminently fit him for the discharge of the duties of that high office."

AS GOVERNOR.

The patriotic people of New-York remember, with feelings of unmixed pain, the conduct of our State Executive through the period of two years preceding the inauguration of Governor Fenton, the indifference which characterized all movements professedly instituted in support of the war, the obstacles interposed in the way of the people, the apparent sympathy with disloyal men, and the wholesale system of apology for traitors, and abuse of patriots and patriotic effort. The soldier battling for Liberty against treason, slavery and barbarism, seemed to be remembered only that a well directed, adroit and carefully maintained fire might be kept up in the rear of the Union lines. The people, with feelings of inexpressible gladness, and of devout gratitude to God, welcomed the day on which Governor Fenton took on the robes of office. From that hour this great State marched on with her soldiers and sailors to the music of the Union, in the same line as her sisters. Abraham Lincoln, loving and beloved, merciful and just, martyred and now named as sage with Washington, found in the new Executive a faithful friend and confidential counsellor, a patriotic and untiring spirit, and a whole-hearted devotion to the cause of the country. Immediately after his inauguration, Governor Fenton visited the National Capital for consultation with the President, as to the best mode of employing the whole power of our State in the work of speedily crushing the rebellion; and from that time the State and National Governments were as one for the accomplishment of that object. Speaking the voice of the people, he declared, in his first message, that,

"Having resolutely determined to go thus far in the struggle, we shall not falter nor hesitate when the rebellion reels under our heavy blows, when the victory, upon all the methods of human calculation, is so near."

In conclusion he said:

"It is not a mistake to assume that, whatever exigency may follow, whether domestic or foreign, the great body of the people will go forward to meet and overwhelm it with the same firm and irresistible energy which characterized our ancestors, and has marked the subsequent course of our civilization. In this patriotic determination of the people for unity, liberty and the Constitution, I shall at all times earnestly join."

In accordance with these declarations, four days after his inauguration, Governor Fenton issued a proclamation, responding to President Lincoln's call for troops, of 20th of December, 1864, in which he urges the people to

"Exercise the utmost diligence in filling the quota which may be assigned them under the call of the President. * * * Believing ourselves to be inspired by the same lofty sentiments of patriotism which animated our fathers in founding our free institutions, let us continue to imitate their bright example of courage, endurance and faithfulness to principle in maintaining them. Let us be faithful, and persevere. Let there be a rally of the People in every city, village and town."

And this proclamation was followed on the 1st of February by a stirring and patriotic address to the people, demanding renewed diligence in their endeavors to fill up the ranks of the Union Army for the final effort.

When the results of the great combinations of the Lieutenant-General were manifested, and Richmond fell into our hands, and the armies of traitors were everywhere flying before us, or laying down their arms in unconditional submission, Governor Fenton issued a proclamation of thanksgiving; but all songs of joy were turned into a wail of anguish and woe, as the news came to every cottage in the land, that our President had fallen in the moment of greatest victory.

During his administration, Gov. Fenton has felt it to be his duty to veto several bills requiring large appropriations of money, proposed to be raised by an increased taxation, and this has been done from the best and purest motives. In one of these messages, 4th April, 1865, he very forcibly and justly observes:

"The present condition of public finances, and the increased burdens of taxation, which already press heavily upon the people, plainly demand a prudent husbandry of

the resources of the State, on the part of those responsible for the management of its affairs."

In the spirit of this remark he has sought to administer the financial affairs of the State; a rigid economy has marked his whole career as Governor, as it has all his official life.

On the 28th of April, 1865, he transmitted to the Senate his veto of the New-York Central Railroad bill, authorizing an increase in the rates of fare.

On the 20th of April last, the "Whitehall and Plattsburgh Railroad bill" was vetoed, and the "Albany and Susquehanna Railroad bill;" and he also withheld his assent from the "Oneida Lake Canal bill."

The reason for this action was based in the fact that these measures, if adopted would, for the accomplishment of objects not then absolutely necessary, add largely to the already burdensome taxation. In his veto message the Governor says:

"The State tax for the ensuing fiscal year will amount to nearly or quite ten millions of dollars. * * * * * Before adding to this a heavy sum in aid of corporate enterprises, however meritorious, to which the public faith is not already pledged, we should consider whether it would be just to the great body of the people in a year when county as well as federal taxation, will probably be higher than in any future year of the present century, and when the monetary condition of the country is subject to changes between seed-time and harvest, which may tax to the utmost the resources and the energy of our citizens. The measures in question admit of postponement, if they involve an addition to a burden which is already as great as the tax-payer should be required to bear. * * * * * I cannot believe it to be sound policy, at this juncture, to add to the State tax for the coming year, a further sum for the purpose of expediting the completion of these roads. It is rarely wise to increase taxation in a period when there is an inflated currency and a falling market. The year after the close of a great war is always one of critical peril to individual interests. We all recognize the necessity of repairing the losses incident to the recent struggle, by a rigid entrenchment in our public expenditures, in co-operation with private economy and energy. An undue pressure on the industrial classes retards the restoration of general prosperity, and no pressure is so discouraging to vigorous enterprise as the dead weight of inordinate taxation. It bears with special severity on those who compose the largest portion of the community."

It is estimated that the passage of these bills would have added one million and a half of dollars to the annual tax bill. But it is not to be supposed that Governor Fenton is opposed to these projects, but that under a high sense of the duty of strict economy in expenditures, at the present time, his fear of overburdening the people of the State with taxes, in the belief that the

obligations growing out of the war, the claims of the soldiers for permanent provisions, and the need of other public works of a more general character, should be first met and cared for, he withheld for the present his assent from these laudable measures. Clearly, under existing circumstances, the carrying on of such expensive projects should, at least, be for a time delayed. Had the Governor sanctioned one of these measures, consistency would have required him to approve them all, though some might be more meritorious than others. No selection, under the circumstances, could well be made.

The completion of these projects, however, is only a question of time, and were it not for the reasons already briefly mentioned, it cannot be doubted by any one that Gov. Fenton would cheerfully give them his assent. His whole public life has been marked by a high regard for all the interests of the State, including its noble scheme for internal improvements.

Impelled by a solemn sense of duty, he has thus exercised the veto power, putting at hazard his popularity with the people to whom these projects were the promise of increased prosperity. He has submitted to them the reasons of his action, and they, together with the residue of their fellow citizens, have justly accepted his course as the highest proof of the purity of his public character, and the disinterestedness of his public acts.

Throughout these two trying years every interest of our State has received the fostering care of Governor Fenton. No cause has he neglected. Education, Internal Improvements, Agriculture, Manufactures, the Militia, Prison Reform, Charities, and the numberless others which go to make up the civilization and culture, the comfort and wealth of the people of this State. Especially has the care of the Public Health been to him a matter of deep concern, and in his last message he urged with great earnestness further and most radical legislation on this subject. Facts justify the statement, that the present efficient quarantine system in the City of New-York and its vicinity is largely due to his unwearied exertions.

With the quotation of a paragraph from the conclusion of his last annual message, which must commend itself to all for its justness and beauty, this hasty review of Mr. Fenton's course as Governor will be closed :

"Towards our misguided countrymen we entertain no feeling of bitterness or un-

kindness: and animated by a generous forbearance, we will cordially co-operate in our respective spheres of influence, in supporting the general interests of all those entitled to invoke our protection, with a firm adherence to the just rights of all, in a spirit of kindness, all traces of alienation will gradually and forever disappear.

"In the sunlight of returning peace we see opening before us a future of prosperity and greatness for our common country, such as has hitherto been offered to none of the nations of the earth. The war which threatened the overthrow or division of the Republic had developed its resources, consolidated its strength, and infused into the whole body of the people a spirit of renewed energy, vigor and confidence. To us and to our children it is an occasion of heartful joy and gratitude that the protecting Hand which upholds the heavens has been our constant support. The grand and noble edifice reared by those who signed the Declaration of our National Independence, has withstood the rocking of a tempest which would have overthrown the oldest monarchy; and it stands to-day, as we trust it will ever stand, firm and unmoved, with civil liberty as its chief corner stone."

THE FRIEND OF THE SOLDIER.

The course of Gov. Fenton, while a Representative in Congress, in persistently urging a consideration of the claims of soldiers and their descendants, growing out of the war of the Revolution, that of 1812, and with the Indians, is a promise of faithfulness to all those who have ever borne arms in defence of constitutional liberty in America. From the eloquent words and faithful, indefatigable labors of Mr. Fenton in the past, we could have foretold, as the armies of the Union were mustering for the Great War, that every man wearing the army blue and marching beneath the Stars and Stripes, would find in him a fast friend, true to all the soldiers' high interests in the camp, on the march and the field, on the cot of the hospital, and at the home which he loved.

Nobly has that early promise been redeemed. From the beginning of the late War, Gov. Fenton has made the care for the soldiers of the Union one of the objects of his life. What object more worthy, or manifesting a heart more noble and generous. It required little patriotism, little goodness, little love for man, to urge men to volunteer or to pave their way with bounties into the army. But it does require each, in large measure, to watch beside them wounded, and establish and perfect systems by which the anxieties of loved ones at home might be assuaged, and their discomforts removed, by which the wounded soldier and the scarred veteran, or the widow, the orphan children, or surviving parents of those who died in the service, should be secured by ample pensions. To achieve these noble objects, Gov. Fenton has unceasingly labored,

while his words of sympathy and admiration have been freely bestowed upon the soldier in his sufferings and privations. These words were the dearer to the soldier, because he knew that they came from a heart, one with his, in the struggle to put down the slave-masters' Rebellion, and maintain Liberty.

In the summer of 1862, when the City of Washington, was crowded with the wounded from the unfortunate battle-fields of Virginia, Mr. Fenton, who had long been foremost in ministrations to the soldiers in the hospitals and camps, was elected President of the New-York Soldiers' Aid Society of the City of Washington. And many of the survivors of the wounded men who were gathered there, can testify to the tenderness and assiduity with which he personally ministered to their wants. While all who are in any degree conversant with that branch of philanthropic effort, are aware of the great usefulness to which that Soldiers' Aid Society attained under his direction. His purse was ever open, and his hand ever ready to relieve those who were suffering in the holy cause of the Nation.

But his efforts were not confined to mere personal services. He employed his official power and influence. He sought at once to perfect our legislation in the interest of the soldier, and the titles of some of the bills of that character, which he introduced and advocated, will be given as illustrating this remark, viz.:

1*st*. "*A bill to facilitate the granting of furloughs and discharges to disabled soldiers.*"

2*d*. "*A bill to facilitate the payment of bounties and arrears of pay due wounded and deceased soldiers.*"

3*d*. "*A bill to provide for a payment of a bounty of one hundred dollars to soldiers honorably discharged, by reason of wounds and sickness, when they have served for nine months, and a proportional amount for less terms exceeding three months.*"

4. "*A bill to simplify the form of applications for pensions.*"

Throughout his Congressional career, Mr. Fenton continued, as he had begun, to render all possible aid to the soldier, and to those he had left at home—and when he became Governor of this State, 1st January, 1865, he carried into that new position the spirit he had manifested in the National Legis

lature. No longer was the State represented in her highest office, by one who had no sympathy for her sons struggling for the national life on Southern battle-fields, or pining and starving in Southern prison pens. There was a Governor in the chair who spoke the sentiments of the people, and was worthy of the fame of New-York.

The rebellion having collapsed, and the rebel armies surrendered, steps were at once taken by the General Government to send home the Union soldiers at the earliest practicable day, consistent with the general safety. About the middle of May it was announced that the soldiers of this State would be mustered out and paid off at Albany. Gov. Fenton was then in Washington, on business in their interests, where he visited those lying in the hospitals, as well as those who were in camp about that city. Upon the announcement of this order he at once applied to the authorities to secure its modification, and on his representations that it would be more satisfactory to the men and their friends, and greatly to the advantage of all, the order was changed so that they could be mustered out at the places where they were received, near their own homes, viz.: New-York City, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh Albany, Plattsburgh, Ogdensburgh, Sackett's Harbor, or Watertown, Auburn, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Elmira and Binghamton or Norwich. He welcomed in person many of the returning regiments both in this City and at Albany, and addressed the soldiers at the State depot in this city. But not being able to meet each regiment as it landed, he issued the following chaste and beautiful address, welcoming them to their homes, which was distributed among the men as they arrived.

Soldiers of New-York.—Your constancy, your patriotism, your faithful services and your valor have culminated in the maintenance of the Government, the vindication of the Constitution and the laws, and the perpetuity of the Union.

You have elevated the dignity, brightened the renown, and enriched the history of your State. You have furnished to the world a grand illustration of our American manhood, of our devotion to liberty, and of the permanence and nobility of our institutions.

Soldiers! your State thanks you, and gives you the pledge of her lasting gratitude. She looks with pride upon your glorious achievements, and consecrates to all time your unfaltering heroism. To you New-York willingly intrusted her honor, her fair name and her great destinies; you have proved worthy of the confidence reposed in you, and have returned these trusts with added lustre and increased value. The coming home of all our organizations, it is hoped, is not far distant. We welcome you, and rejoice with you upon the peace your valor has achieved. Your honorable scars we regard as the truest badges of your bravery and the highest evidences of the pride and patriotism which animated you.

Sadly and yet proudly we receive as the emblems of heroic endurance your tattered and worn ensigns, and fondly deposit these relics of glory with all their cherished memories and endearing associations, in our appointed repositories. With swelling hearts we bade God speed to the departing recruit; with glowing pride and deepened fervor we say welcome! to the returning veteran. We have watched you all through the perilous period of your absence, rejoicing in your victories and mourning in your defeats. We will treasure your legends, your brave exploits, and the glorified memory of your dead comrades, in records more impressive than the monuments of the past and enduring as the liberties you have secured.

The people will regard with jealous pride, your welfare and honor, not forgetting the widow, the fatherless, and those who were dependent upon the fallen hero.

The fame and glory you have won for the State and the Nation, shall be transmitted to our children as a most precious legacy, lovingly to be cherished and reverently to be preserved.

R. E. Fenton.

In December, 1865, Gov. Fenton established at Albany "The Home" for destitute and disabled soldiers, and it now rests with the State to make some adequate provision for its permanent support. And none can doubt that this will be done if Gov. Fenton should continue in office for another term, for he declared in his first message:

"These brave veterans are in a poor condition to accept for all their sacrifices the simple honors of a nations gratitude. They must be fed, clothed and warmed."

And, in a public address, delivered not long subsequent, he said:

"Since the close of the war and the return of large numbers suffering from the trials and dangers of a faithful service, the best and most economical system of affording prompt and practical relief has attracted my earnest attention."

In his last annual message Gov. Fenton again brought this matter to the attention of the Legislature, in a dignified but most eloquent and earnest appeal, from which but a single passage can be quoted here:

"During my administration no subject has occupied more of my attention than the condition of our soldiers. I have not hesitated to make liberal use of the sum so munificently granted by the last Legislature to provide for their relief and care."

No mere words can heighten the effect which the simple recital of this patriotic record must produce. It commends Gov. Fenton to the reverence, as well as the love of every man, woman and child, whose heart was with the Nation in the recent bloody strife, and none of those who gave their friends and loved ones to the country, and none who marched and fought beneath "old glory," as the soldiers named the standard of the Union, can fail of confidence in him, who, in dark as well as bright days, in the camp, on the march and in

the hospital, as man and citizen, as Legislator and Governor, has given freely, generously, of his money, his time, his sympathy, his influence, personal and official, to the promotion of the comfort and the lasting happiness of the defenders of our flag. Wherever there dwells one of "the boys in blue," veterans of a glorious and victorious contest, there must, also, ever be found a faithful friend of Reuben E. Fenton.

AS AN AGRICULTURIST.

In his long public career Gov. Fenton has neglected no interest of the people of this State Especially have the great agricultural interests of New-York been his study, and he is well known as an intelligent agriculturist. In numerous instances he has been selected to deliver the annual address at County Fairs and farmers' gatherings, so that his discussions of this class of topics, always at the time acceptable to his hearers, would form a volume of able essays, interesting to every tiller of the soil.

His efforts to increase the endowment and perfect the organization of the Cornell University, founded by the munificent Senator of that name, for the elevation of agriculture and its kindred sciences, are well known, and some of his opinions and suggestions have been formally presented in his annual messages, in the first of which he observed:

"Everything which pertains to the cause of agriculture is the concern of all. The productions of the earth from tillage are the chief resource of our prosperity in times of peace, and upon their abundance the support and effective force of our armies is dependent in times of war."

APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE.

It is not wonderful that a public course such as has been here outlined should secure general approval. And all varieties of organizations seem to have united in giving that approval a formal expression. A few resolutions of that character may here be quoted.

On the 15th of August last, the Union men of St. Lawrence County, in convention,

Resolved, That we regard the administration of Reuben E. Fenton with satisfaction; that his firmness in defending the interests of all the people of the State from oppressive taxation for appropriations in favor of local enterprises is, in the highest degree, commendable; that we regard his official acts, in every sense, statesmanlike.

patriotic, and calculated to confer the greatest good upon the greatest number. We are in favor of his re-nomination.

The Orleans County Convention

Resolved, That Reuben E. Fenton, as Governor of the State of New-York, has ably and faithfully discharged the duties of that high office, and proved himself worthy the confidence of the people. For his loyalty and untiring efforts to aid the General Government in crushing the rebellion; for his constant friendship and care for the Union soldiers; for his watchful guardianship of the public treasury; for his twice saving the people from the extortionate demands of a wealthy and powerful corporation; and for his general devotion to the interests of the State, he deserves the thanks of all its citizens without respect to party; and for these things, as well as for his unfaltering adhesion to the principles of the Union party, he is entitled to our most cordial support.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of New-York, eight of whom out of the twelve comprising the body being his opponents, on motion of Smith Ely, Jr., a Democrat, seconded by William M. Tweed, also a Democrat, unanimously

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board are due and are hereby tendered to his Excellency, Reuben E. Fenton, for his recent vetoes of various bills passed by the Legislature of this State infringing on the rights and franchises of this city and county; and we sincerely congratulate the people of the State of New-York in having an Executive who possesses the vigilance and fearlessness necessary to correct the errors of hasty and improper legislation.

In this connection mention should be made of the reception tendered to Gov. Fenton by the citizens of New-York at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, on the 24th of November last, though no detailed account of this, one of the most pleasant and fashionable gatherings of the season, can be given here. Suffice it to say, that it indicated with unmistakable clearness his hold upon the hearts of all our people, and that the brief address which he delivered in response to repeated calls, to the vast concourse of people assembled in front of the hotel, was fit and graceful as a specimen of popular eloquence, and was received with the utmost enthusiasm. With such voices rising from the whole people the last Republican Union State Convention could not do otherwise than set the seal of approval upon the public life of Gov. Fenton, and especially upon his gubernatorial administration, by again, by acclamation, presenting his name to the people for their votes.

His views upon all questions pertaining to our State affairs are known, they have been approved, and it is not necessary here to repeat them. They appear in

his various messages, general and special, and have been thoroughly discussed before the people. It is safe to assume they will be sanctioned.

Upon the grave national questions involved in the present canvass, his views are also pronounced, and in accordance with the sentiments of the loyal people of the land. They are best stated in his own wise and temperate language, in a letter recently addressed to his friends in the City of New-York.

LETTER FROM GOVERNOR FENTON.

STATE OF NEW-YORK, EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
ALBANY, *October 13th*, 1866.

GENTLEMEN,—I cannot attend the meeting at Cooper Institute on the 15th instant, to which you invite me; my public duties at the Capital will prevent.

The questions now agitating the public mind are of the greatest moment and interest; and they are such as could not be presented to any other people. It will not be forgotten that the gigantic war, through which we have passed, was prosecuted on behalf of the Government in defence of the supremacy of the ballot. The clearly expressed will of the nation is the supreme law of the land. Against an expression of this will, men honored by large communities with public trusts which they were ready to betray for purposes of guilty ambition, stimulated their States to revolt, and by crafty and dangerous devices, inflamed the passions of their people, until, in a spirit of frantic and blind delusion, they fired upon their own flag, and enveloped the whole land in the flame of war. The common traditions; the national pride; the sacred oath of fealty; these were all forgotten, scouted or ignored, and, under the ill-starred banner of rebellion, organized armies marched to crush out the grand heritage of American freedom, and to reverse, by force of arms, the constitutional expression of the popular will. Patriotic men sprung from the various walks of labor and industry, from the schools and colleges, the fields and the workshops; fortunes were thrown into the scale; fireside circles were broken, and every household was made familiar with the perils of mutilation, captivity and death, in that common spirit of loyalty and devotion which prompted the fixed resolve, from the hour that Sumter fell, that the Union our fathers had established should stand, and that the rights and liberties of a free people, secured by covenant, should be maintained in blood. These patriot forces trampled out the fires of rebellion; the principle of popular government was vindicated; and the leaders and armies of the conspirators surrendered, as prisoners of war, the weapons with which they sought the destruction of their country.

To the representatives of these communities, who thus organized to destroy our liberties, we are urged to commit, *at once and without guaranties*, the authority to legislate for us; to award justice to the soldiers and sailors by whom they were subdued; to determine whether the public debt shall be paid; and to claim undue preponderance of representation in the National Councils—and a disproportionate vote in the Electoral College, as a reward for a defeated and treasonable attempt to subvert the Government.

Places are now claimed in the Senate and House of Representatives for men who forswore their allegiance to the Constitution, and held office under the usurpation of Davis and his associate conspirators. Such an assumption is against the common sense of the country. It is plain that on the dissolution of the rebel armies there was no lawful local government in any of the insurgent States; nor was there any power in the people of those States to regain the status they lost by organized rebellion. The

State action which they now invoke to excuse individuals from the penalties of personal crime, disabled them as communities from resuming, without the consent of the people on whom they made war, a participation in governing them, by claiming the places abdicated for the purposes of treason. Their right of representation as States being thus practically suspended by their own act, what power is competent to reinstate them in their former relations to the Government? Evidently it is not in the States themselves, independent of Congressional sanction or recognition. There is no lawful local Executive to call an election, and no lawful local government under which such an election can be made. The Federal Government is to determine what shall be the terms of restoration. It is a question for the sovereign power, and with us the sovereign is not the President, but the people. Under the Constitution, the will of the people is to be expressed through its representatives in Congress assembled. The simple duty of the President is to execute their will, thus expressed. By interposing his veto, he may compel them to express it by a two-thirds vote; but it is the will of the people, and not his will which is expressed; and it is not by his vote, but by the vote of Congress, that it has the force of a popular law.

With unerring judgment and forecast the martyred Lincoln appreciated the question in its true aspect; and in commissioning loyal men, with the simple powers of Military Governors, he provided for the present peace; while he recognized in the people in Congress assembled the only competent authority to restore permanent civil government in the insurgent States, under the Constitution they had forsworn, and to determine the conditions under which they should be restored to their practical relations in the Union. Such is the common judgment of the loyal States. Such is the clear conviction and the firm demand of the mass of loyal men North and South. It is a question which belongs to the people, and not to the President—to the law-making power, and not to the agent, whose duty it is to enforce the laws and to obey them.

But it is claimed that the adoption of the amendments proposed by Congress, ought not to be made a condition of representation: that, however just in themselves, no Constitutional safeguard should be provided which has not been passed upon in Congress by the insurgent States. The weakness of this position is too obvious to deceive any but those who advance it. The President is, doubtless, competent to proclaim the cessation of hostilities and the return of peace; but Congress alone can guarantee a republican form of government to States which have subverted their own governments established under the Constitution.

In the discharge of a high public trust, the present Congress has patiently and laboriously investigated the condition of that portion of the country convulsed by the recent rebellion; and, in a commendable spirit of moderation, it has proposed for adoption an amendment to the Constitution, so reasonable and appropriate to the existing state of affairs, that its propriety and justice are admitted even by those who oppose its adoption. The plan of adjustment thus presented is the only one before the people. It has the sanction of an overwhelming majority in the Senate and House of Representatives; it has been heartily and earnestly indorsed by the people of every State in which a general election has since been held; it will receive the unanimous approval of all the States, whose unwavering loyalty bore us triumphantly through the war; it is a noble and magnanimous peace offering tendered by Congress in behalf of the people, to the misguided States which permitted themselves to be precipitated into rebellion by bold and reckless leaders, some of whom are now demanding instant and unconditional admission to seats in the governing council of the nation.

Very respectfully,

R. E. FENTON.

To Messrs. F. A. Conkling, Francis A. Thomas, Owen W. Brennan, John Fitch, Charles A. Dana, Committee.

In person Gov. Fenton is tall, slight, commanding, with great grace of movement and gesture, an animated and pleasing countenance—his dark hair sprinkled with gray—and a low, but clear and musical voice. His manners are courtly and dignified, but cordial and winning, and, in social life, he is beloved and admired by all for his unaffected modesty, and for those graces and elements of character which make the genial companion, the kind friend, the good neighbor, the philanthrophist and public-spirited citizen.

The Union men of New-York have selected Mr. Fenton as their representative and standard bearer in this State election, which, as we contemplate it, widens into a national contest, and takes on the character of a decisive battle—a very Gettysburg. And the issue is whether tried patriots only, or the avowed traitors and those who have sympathized with them, shall have a controlling voice in the settlement of the complex questions growing out of the rebellion, involving the national faith to the public creditor, the freedman, the patriot soldier, as well as the existence of liberty, and the causes of a new rebellion for the reasons of the old. Between the arrogant demands of a single man speaking in the interests of traitors, and the voice of Congress, representing the loyal sentiment of the country, the voters of New-York are soon to choose. Men of New-York! shall loyalists only, or loyalists and traitors mingled, settle for you and your children the momentous questions of reconstruction? Shall one man filling an office to which he was never elected, pass finally upon questions which the people never supposed would be placed in his hands, or shall Representatives fresh from the people, and, acting under their inspiration and for them, fix the conditions upon which unrepentant traitors and traitor communities may be restored to full rights and privileges under the Constitution which they spurned? Are you for a surrender, in the councils of the nation, to the very men, unchanged and as traitorous in heart as ever, whom your sons vanquished on bloody fields? Are you for the palmetto or the pine? For the "Stars and Bars" or the "Stars and Stripes?" For the rebellious South or for your Country? If for the latter, your vote will be given for Reuben E. Fenton.

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